

Appln. No. 10/030,303

Attorney Docket No. 10541-929

III. Remarks

Claims 1-17 are pending in the application. No claims have been cancelled.
Claims 1-17 have been amended. No new claims have been added.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 USC §102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,243,456 issued to Cesano (Cesano). Cesano discloses a method for laminating inner door panels for an automobile. An upper and lower mold member are moved towards each other to mold a substrate layer and a coating layer (Column 7, lines 15-24). After full compression of a pair of resilient elements and upon further downward movement of a press platen, the threshold value of deformation of the resilient elements will be reached and eventually a cutting edge interacts with a shearing edge to cut off a margin portion to produce a substrate edge while maintaining the free edge portions of the coating layer (Column 7, lines 56-66).

In an embodiment of the present invention, a process for forming a planiform piece is provided. The process includes covering a face of a layer of support material in the area of a portion with a cladding sheet. Further, the support material is cut along said portion such that said cladding projects from said support material in the area of said portion. A forming step is provided to form the support material and cladding into the planiform piece having a predefined shape as defined by the die. The foregoing is achieved by pre-positioning a cutting tool between said cladding and said support material along said portion and said cutting is simultaneously affected when the support material is covered by the cladding and the planiform piece is formed.

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While Cesano discloses a method for forming a laminate, Cesano does not disclose simultaneously laminating a cladding sheet to a support material and cutting said support material. Cesano discloses first laminating a flexible film to a substrate layer and then through additional and subsequent steps, cutting the substrate layer, as depicted in Figures 1-3. The present invention advantageously provides simultaneous forming and cutting of a support material and cladding sheet in a single operation. Thus, the present invention as now claimed, in amended claims 1 and 8 is not taught or suggested by Cesano. Accordingly, Applicants request allowance of claim 1 and 8.

With respect to claims 2-7, these claims ultimately depend on claim 1 and therefore are patentable for at least the same reasons as given above in support of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 2-7.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

Claims 11-17 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,991,478 issued to Riley (Riley). Riley discloses a method for trimming a work piece using a blade assembly having side by side blade segments aligned with the contour to be cut. A rubber roller applies longitudinal cutting force to the blade segments in sequential fashion by rolling across the blade segments. The segment ends are opposite the cutting ends. The blade segments are returned to the non-cutting position by a tensioned wire threaded through a notch in the shaft of each of the blade segments. As illustrated in Figure 2 of Riley, the blade segments are mounted on the pivoting blade fixture. An actuator pneumatically moves the

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blade fixture between a cutting and non-cutting position. In the non-cutting position, the work piece may be readily inserted for trimming or removing after trimming. In the cutting or closed position, the blade is oriented generally vertically for cutting. Rollers are pressed into contact with the blade segments by pneumatic or mechanical actuators which apply pressure to the rollers. By controlling the pressure on the blades and providing a proper resilient rolling surface adequate cutting pressure is delivered to the blades without generating too much pressure which would cut through or damage the substrate of the work piece (Column 4, lines 49-68 and Column 5, lines 1-8).

However, Riley does not disclose a method for simultaneously cutting and forming a laminate made of a cladding and a support material. Riley only teaches trimming a laminate or composite. Riley does not disclose any forming process at all. Thus, Riley and Cesano taken together or separately do not teach or suggest the invention, as now claimed, in claims 1 and 8. Therefore, these claims are patentable over Cesano and Riley. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 1 and 8.

With respect to claims 11-17, these claims ultimately depend on claim 8 and therefore are patentable for at least the same reasons as given above in support of claim 8. Accordingly, allowance of claims 11-17 is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY

Pending Claims 1-17 as amended are patentable. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner grant early allowance of these claims. The Examiner is invited

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to contact the undersigned attorneys for the Applicants via telephone if such communication would expedite this application.

6/15/04
Date

Respectfully submitted,


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